

DON Pathways Programs Implementing Guide

Department of the Navy
Office of Civilian Human Resources

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INTRODUCTION

Executive Order (E.O.) 13562 of 27 December 2010 establishes Pathways Programs and Schedule D hiring authorities. The purpose of this document is to provide Department of the Navy (DON) guidance on the use of the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) and Department of Defense (DoD) Pathways Programs. This guide is to be used in conjunction with the 5 CFR 362, the OPM Pathways Program Implementing Guide and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) established between DoD and OPM. The DoD Implementing Guidance delegates several aspects of the Pathways Programs to the components. This guide will outline those responsibilities delegated to the DON.

COVERAGE AND AUTHORITY

The hiring authority for Pathways is Schedule D excepted service appointing authority provided in 5 CFR 213.3402(a). Positions intended for conversion to the competitive service range from Student Interns who may be appointed at any grade level for which they are qualified, in accordance with OPM qualification standards to include the 1992 OPM Student Trainee Standards (see Appendix A), to Recent Graduates and Presidential Management Fellows (PMFs) who are appointed at the GS 5, 7 or 9 (or equivalent grades or pay band, including FWS). Recent Graduates and PMFs may be appointed up to the GS 12, or equivalent, for certain scientific research positions in which the candidates possess a Ph.D.

Excepted service organizations are not covered by the Pathways Program (e.g. the Intelligence community). These activities may however, develop similar programs.

PROGRAM LABELS

All Pathways Programs in the DON must use the following naming conventions:

- DON Pathways Internship Program
- DON Pathways Summer Internship Program
- DON Recent Graduate Program
- DON Presidential Management Fellows Program

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The DON Pathways Program Coordinator (PPC) –

The DON PPC is a position located at the Office of Civilian Human Resources (OCHR) Headquarters and is responsible for:

- Implementation and execution of Pathways Programs within the DON
- Program management including assessment, evaluation and oversight
- Reporting to DoD
- Liaison for OPM and DoD on all Pathways related issues
- Approval of 120 day Pathways Program extensions



DON PMF Coordinator –

The DON PFM Coordinator works with the DON PPC and is responsible for:

- Reporting number of PMFs
- Liaison with Commands
- Liaison with OPM on PMF matters

Echelon 1 and 2 Director, Civilian Personnel Program (DCPP) –

DCPPs are responsible for:

- Designating a Command Pathways Program Manager (PPM)
- Validating Human Capital Planning
- Implementing and executing Pathways programs within the command
- Supporting and monitoring workforce plan in support of Pathways hiring goals
- Ensuring supplemental nature of the authority
- Providing advise on workforce planning, funding and Command program oversight ensuring diverse use of hiring authorities un support of entry level hiring
- Endorsing 120 day extensions
- Funding and resources within the program

Command Pathways Program Manager (PPM) –

Command PPMs are responsible for:

- Acting as point of contact for DON PPC on all Pathways matters
- Providing information regarding the use of Pathways to DON PPC
- Executing and overseeing Pathways programs within the command
- Monitoring Individual Development Plans (IDP) as appropriate for recent graduates and PMFs
- Preparing and sending 120 day extension requests to DON PPC

Activities –

Activities are responsible for:

- Providing a meaningful onboarding process in accordance with the procedures outlined in this guide
- Ensuring funding and training opportunities for both participants and mentors
- Ensuring funding of position in the competitive service for participants upon program completion
- Assigning mentors for Recent Graduates and PMFs



Activity Human Resources Office (HRO) –

The HROs provides human resources guidance to activity hiring managers on the use of Pathways and are responsible for:

- Maintaining participant agreements
- Monitoring appointment expiration dates (not to exceed (NTE) dates) to ensure appropriate action is taken to convert (or terminate) Pathways participants to competitive service positions
- Coordinating public notification timelines with Human Resources Service Centers (HRSCs)

Human Resources Service Centers (HRSCs) –

The HRSCs provide appointing and conversion authority and are responsible for:

- Posting Pathways Job Opportunity Announcements (JOAs) or Ads on USAJOBS
- Verifying basic eligibility and qualifications of applicants
- Issuing referral lists in accordance with 5 CFR 302 and procedures as outlined in this guide
- Offering tactical advice and guidance on the use of Pathways and other authorities

DON Centralized Program Managers –

Centralized programs are distinguished from command programs because they have a DON centralized funding source. Other characteristics of a centralized program include, charters and formalized training programs. Centralized program managers (i.e. acquisition, financial management and human resources) are responsible for:

- Recruiting Pathways participants within their respective programs
- Ensuring training funds
- Validating Pathways is used as a supplemental hiring authority for entry-level positions
- Preparing and sending 120 day extension requests to DON PPC



PUBLIC NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT

To meet public notification requirements, DON shall use USAJOBS to post job opportunity announcements (JOAs) and accept applications. To ensure consistency and transparency, standardized JOA templates shall be used in accordance with the common business process. Recruitment may be limited geographically, such as a local commuting area as defined in 5 CFR 351.203, or to other recruitment sources (e.g. Schedule A).

OPM requires all opportunities be published in USAJOBS to make the position easily searchable for potential candidates. When building the vacancy announcement in USA Staffing, the *Position Title Field* shall contain the naming conventions as cited in this guide to facilitate job searches for students and recent graduates.

JOAs - Activities must coordinate recruitment efforts with their servicing HRSC to set up a timeline and generate JOAs in USAJOBS. Activities will submit Requests for Personnel Actions (RPAs) with recruitment checklist and all applicable information, including but not limited to:

- Area of consideration (AOC)
- Special hiring considerations
- Recruitment type (interns or recent grad)
- Any other relevant recruitment information

Ads - USAJOBS Ads may be used to advertise recruitment events. Ads may include information regarding specific recruitment events, command/activity mission and/or links to activity portals and other information. These Ads must provide information on how to apply for the job (e.g. USAJOBS JOA) and will ultimately need to link back to a USAJOBS JOA.

All Pathways Internship and Recent Graduate opportunities must be posted on USAJOBS in one of these forms. PMF opportunities will be announced annually in accordance with OPM published procedures.

ASSESSMENT AND REFERRALS

The premise of creating Schedule D is to establish an exception to the competitive service with a focus on education. Pathways is intended to be a supplemental hiring authority; therefore other hiring authorities including Delegated Examining (DE) should be used to reach individuals who possess a combination of work experience and education.

Assessments

There will be standard assessment templates for Pathways positions filled through USAJOBS/USA Staffing that may be modified to add quality ranking factors (QRF) or selective placement factors (SPF) and may be used in conjunction with OPM Assess. HR professionals should be consulted when adding QRFs or SPFs. Applicants will be assessed based on Pathways Program eligibility requirements and OPM qualification standards, including any QRFs or SPFs. The 1992 OPM Student Trainee Qualification Standards, Appendix A, may be used for interns ONLY.



Veterans Preference

Applicants must be referred in veteran's preference order, per 5 CFR 302, using either ranked or unranked referral lists, or category rating-like procedures.

APPOINTMENTS

Interns

Interns may be appointed for an initial period expected to last more than one year, or on a temporary basis not to exceed (NTE) one year. Interns with an NTE date may be extended for up to one additional year, except for seasonal work which totals less than six months per year which may be extended for additional seasons. Interns with NTE dates may also be converted to an internship with no NTE. Interns with no NTE dates may continue in the program as long as they continue to meet eligibility requirements (enrolled at least half-time in qualify educational institute).

Recent Graduates

Recent Graduate appointments are one-year, entry-level, developmental appointments. Pursuant to the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between OPM and DoD, Recent Graduate appointments in Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) programs, engineering (08xx) and computer science (1550) series may be two-year programs.

ONBOARDING

Activities will provide all Pathways Program participants with appropriate, meaningful onboarding and orientation for their specific program. The onboarding process will include orientation to DON and Federal employment, the Command, Pathways Programs, office culture, etc. Onboarding must also include performance discussions, expectations and rotational assignments.

Key timeframes in the onboarding process:

- Participant Agreement must be executed within 30 days of entry on duty (EOD)
- Individual Development Plan (IDP) must be developed within 45 days of EOD (Recent Grad and PMF)
- Mentors assigned within 90 days of EOD (Recent Grad and PMF)

PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT

Templates are provided for the Participant Agreements for all three Pathways Programs in Appendices B, C and D of the OPM Transition and Implementation Guidance. In accordance with 5 CFR 362.106 agreements must include:

- Description of duties
- Work schedules and length of appointment or expected date the student will graduate
- Mentorship opportunities and training requirements (where applicable)
- Performance evaluation procedures, requirements for successful completion
- Minimum eligibility requirements for conversion to the competitive service
- Any other command or activity specific information necessary, such as agreements with a school

If any of these areas change over the course of the program, a new agreement will need to be executed. Agreements must be executed by the participant, the hiring manager and the approving Activity human resources officer within 30 days of appointment. Participant agreements shall be kept with the HRO and a scanned copy will be sent to the servicing HRSC to be placed in the participant's eOPF in the Temporary Folder.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS (IDP)

Training should reflect the competencies of the position and completion of the IDP should be a condition of promotion for participants. Within 45 days of EOD date the Pathways Interns without NTE dates, Recent Graduate and PMFs must have an IDP developed and approved by his or her supervisor. IDPs include all training and development classes and programs. Opportunities may be both formal and informal. Employees and supervisors are responsible for updating and tracking IDP progress. A copy of the IDP should be kept at the HRO and in the eOPF along with the Participant Agreement.

Interns

Temporary interns with NTE dates are not required to have IDPs.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR RECENT GRADS AND PMFs

Commands and activities are responsible for developing and providing opportunities for training to all Recent Graduate Participants. The Pathways Recent Graduate program requires 40 hours of formal training per year to advance the goals and competencies outlined in the participants IDP. The PMF program requires 80 hours of formal training per year. This training may include:

- Classroom
- Online
- VTC
- Projects and other developmental assignments



Training may not include mandatory training required annually for all DON employees. All training must be linked to program requirements in the IDP. Formal training shall be documented in DCPDS or other approved tool. HROs, centralized program managers and supervisors shall track participants training records.

Interns

There is no formal training requirement for Pathways Interns; activities may use their discretion for providing training for these employees.

MENTORS FOR RECENT GRADS AND PMFs

No later than 90 days after appointment, the activity shall assign Recent Graduates and PMFs mentors. Mentors shall be:

- From outside the participants chain of command
- Tracked in the Participant Agreement
- Changed as necessary with supervisory approval

Activities are encouraged to have a cadre of potential mentors when recruiting for and hiring Pathways Recent Graduates.

Interns

Activities may also provide mentors to interns with no NTE dates

PROGRAM EXTENSIONS

5 CFR 362.303(c) affords agency-approved extensions NTE 120 days for Pathways Program participants to cover rare or unusual circumstances. Criteria for extensions should be decided on a case by case basis and should be limited to:

- Incident that is beyond the control of the organization (e.g. furlough, budget constraints)
- Incident that is beyond the control of the participant (e.g. illness, family emergency)

Command PPMs and centralized program managers may recommend approval of requests for extension and are required to keep track of reasons for extensions. Requests must be submitted 60 days prior to the date the participant is scheduled to convert and must include Pathways participants' name, the program, reason for extension, and the impact if the extension is not approved. Extension requests and written endorsement from the DCPD or centralized program manager must be sent to the DON PPC for coordination of the final decision. DCPDs will submit conversion RPA for extension and a copy will be kept in the eOPF.



BREAKS-IN-PROGRAM FOR INTERNS

A break-in-program is defined as a period of time when an Intern is working but unable to go to school, or is neither attending classes nor working at the agency. Pathways Interns needing a break in program must submit a written request to their supervisor. The request must include:

- Participants name
- Reason for the break
- Estimated timeline as to when they would return
- Impact if the break is not granted

Supervisors will endorse and forward through appropriate channels to the Command DCPD or centralized program manager. DCPDs and centralized program managers may approve breaks-in-program. Routine school breaks (summer, winter etc) are an exception and a break in program does not need to be requested during these times. Work schedules during these times should be outlined in the participant agreement

Military Service

Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) rules on Federal employment apply to Internships, Recent Graduates and PMFs

CONVERSIONS AND TERMINATIONS

Command DCPDs will notify the DON PPC in the command annual report the number of Pathways participants it intends to convert to the competitive service and the number it intends to terminate.

Terminations must be for valid reasons and reported accordingly. Activities must notify their command PPM of any anticipated terminations due to internal circumstances (e.g. budget) where the participant has satisfactorily completed the program requirements and would otherwise have converted to the competitive service. If these participants cannot be placed within their command, or another in the DON, they may be allowed to convert to another organization within the DoD. In order to provide the greatest opportunity to place the Pathways participant within the DON or DoD, command PPMs must notify the DON PPC within 60 days of the potential termination of these participants. They must also include the participants resume and a positive referral. The DON PPC will contact other Major Commands and DoD regarding possible placement.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A sample reporting requirements template is available in Appendix G of the OPM Transition and Implementation Guidance. Activities must submit the required information, to include any and all data calls sent out by OCHR, to their command PPM. Command PPMs will then send this information to OCHR to be consolidated and included in DONs reports to DoD. Commands may also choose to include information on reporting in their Human Capital Reports. Only series/grades that are identified in the annual data call may be use to hire Pathways employees.



PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

OPM, DoD and the DON PPC may perform program assessments to ensure proper use of Pathways to maintain use of the authority. Assessments may include:

- Review of the number of participants
- Review of number converted to competitive service
- Review of number terminated
- Extension requests
- Participant agreements
- IDPs and mentors in place

QUESTIONS

Any questions or clarification of Pathways Programs regulations or policy must be submitted to the Organization (DON) PPC or sent to DONHRFAQ@navy.mil with the subject line "Pathways".



APPENDIX A – 1992 OPM QUALIFICATION STANDARDS

QUALIFICATION STANDARDS

MULTISERIES STUDENT TRAINEE QUALIFICATION STANDARD FOR SCHEDULE B POSITIONS

(p. 1)

This standard describes the qualification requirements for General Schedule, career-related, Schedule B student trainee positions authorized under E.O. 12015. Eligibility and selection requirements for prospective Schedule B student trainees are described in FPM Chapter 308. (Student trainee positions in the competitive service are covered by the *Student Trainee Qualification Standard for Competitive Service*

Positions.) This standard is not applicable to students who are temporarily employed during summer vacations and who have not been appointed to a career-related student trainee program as described above.

Following is a list of the occupational series covered by this standard.

GS-099	General Student Trainee Series	GS-1199	Business and Industry Student Trainee Series
GS-199	Social Science Student Trainee Series	GS-1299	Copyright and Patent Student Trainee Series
GS-299	Personnel Management Student Trainee Series	GS-1399	Physical Science Student Trainee Series
GS-399	Administration and Office Support Student Trainee Series	GS-1499	Library and Archives Student Trainee Series
GS-499	Biological Science Student Trainee Series	GS-1599	Mathematics and Statistics Student Trainee Series
GS-599	Financial Management Student Trainee Series	GS-1699	Equipment and Facilities Management Student Trainee Series
GS-699	Medical and Health Student Trainee Series	GS-1799	Education Student Trainee Series
GS-799	Veterinary Student Trainee Series	GS-1899	Investigation Student Trainee Series
GS-899	Engineering and Architecture Student Trainee Series	GS-1999	Quality Inspection Student Trainee Series
GS-999	Legal Occupations Student Trainee Series	GS-2099	Supply Student Trainee Series
GS-1099	Information and Arts Student Trainee Series	GS-2199	Transportation Student Trainee Series

This standard has been approved by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for use within the Veterans Health Administration under the provisions of section 7402, title 38, U.S.C.

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OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

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REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIAL APPOINTMENT

Student trainees with no previous related education or experience may qualify as described below.

GRADE	LEVEL OF EDUCATION
GS-1	Enrollment in a high school diploma program
GS-2	High school diploma or equivalent
GS-3	Completion of 1 academic year of post-high school study
GS-4	Completion of 2 academic years of post-high school study or associate's degree
GS-5	Completion of 4 academic years of post-high school study leading to a bachelor's degree or completion of 4 academic years of pre-professional study
GS-7	Completion of 1 academic year of graduate level education, bachelor's degree with Superior Academic Achievement as provided in the "General Policies and Instructions" for the <i>Qualification Standards Handbook</i> , or 5 academic years of pre-professional study
GS-9	Completion of 2 academic years of graduate level education or master's or equivalent graduate degree
GS-11	For research positions, completion of all requirements for a master's or equivalent degree

The required education must be (a) related to the field in which student trainees will receive training on the job or (b) applicable under the qualification standard for the target occupational series. Agencies may use selective factors to identify special requirements, e.g., specific courses, needed to perform the work of individual positions.

Special Provisions for Student Trainees With Previous Related Education or Experience

For both initial appointment to and concurrent with conversion from a student trainee program, the applicant's previous education and/or experience (both student trainee and non-student trainee experience) should be evaluated using the qualification standard for the target position to determine whether it is creditable.

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SCHEDULE B STUDENT TRAINEE POSITIONS

If any portion of the education or experience meets the requirements in the qualification standard for the target position, then both initial appointment and conversion may be made at the highest grade level for which the applicant is qualified and eligible.

PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS

Student trainees may be promoted to higher-graded trainee positions based on their Federal Government student trainee work experience, as follows:

To GS-2: Continued study in a high school education program and completion of one period of student trainee work experience.

To GS-3: Completion of one full semester or the equivalent of post-high school study and one period of student trainee work experience.

To GS-4: (a) Completion of 1 academic year of study and two periods of student trainee work experience; or (b) completion of 1½ academic years of study and one period of student trainee work experience.

To GS-5: (a) Completion of 3 academic years of study leading to a bachelor's or higher degree and one period of GS-4 student trainee work experience; or (b) completion of 2½ academic years of study leading to a bachelor's or higher degree and 6 months (at least 960 hours) of GS-4 student trainee work experience.

Student trainee positions where the target occupation follows a one-grade interval pattern:

To GS-6: (a) Completion of 4 academic years of study (or all the requirements) for a bachelor's degree and completion of one period of GS-5 student trainee work experience.

Student trainee positions where the target occupation follows a two-grade interval pattern:

To GS-7: (a) Completion of 4 academic years of study (or all the requirements) for a bachelor's degree and completion of one period of GS-5 student trainee work experience, or (b) completion of 4 academic years of pre-professional study and completion of one period of GS-5 student trainee work experience.



QUALIFICATION STANDARDS

SCHEDULE B STUDENT TRAINEE POSITIONS

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To GS-9: (a) Completion of 1 full year of graduate level study and completion of one period of GS-7 student trainee work experience, or (b) completion of 5 academic years of pre-professional study and completion of one period of GS-7 student trainee work experience.

To GS-11: (a) Completion of 2 full years of graduate level study and completion of one period of GS-9 student trainee work experience.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS

An academic year of undergraduate education is defined as 30 semester hours, 45 quarter hours, or the equivalent in an accredited college or university, or approximately 36 weeks for at least 20 classroom hours per week in an accredited business, technical, or secretarial school. See the "General Policies and Instructions" for the *Qualification Standards Handbook* for the definition of a full year of graduate education.

Pre-professional study is study in fields that require a post-baccalaureate degree at the entry level, e.g., veterinary medicine, social worker.

For purposes of this standard, a period of student trainee work experience is the equivalent of 2 months (320 hours) of work experience.

CONVERSION

Students may be converted noncompetitively to a career or career-conditional appointment to the target position

within 120 days following completion of their educational and work experience requirements. An agency may recommend noncompetitive conversion in another Federal agency provided that all parties agree that the appointment is in the best interest of the Government. Agencies may also promote students noncompetitively using this standard immediately prior to conversion.

When converting students, the following conditions must be met:

- a. Students must meet the qualification standard for the position, including any minimum educational, licensing, or certification requirements; however, students who are converted at the same grade as their final student trainee grade need not meet any length of experience requirements for that grade level;
- b. The position must be in the field, or in a closely related field, for which the students were trained; and
- c. Students must meet all the program requirements in FPM Chapter 308.

TEST REQUIREMENTS

A written test is not required for Schedule B student trainee positions at the time of initial appointment or upon conversion.

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